

# The Quality and Requirements of TCFL Teachers in Overseas Teaching

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**Abstract.** In recent years, with China's growing economic power, it gets increasing high status in the world and thereby "Chinese fever" has also risen. In this context, the demand for TCFL (Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language) teachers is increasing, and the quality and requirements of overseas teachers are also increasing. However, the quality of Chinese teachers at home and abroad is currently uneven, and thus how to solve this problem has become a difficult problem for cultivating TCFL teachers. Based on the current situation of Chinese teachers in the overseas teaching, this paper analyzed the problems in the overseas teaching of TCFL teachers and put forward the quality and requirements of overseas TCFL teachers, with the purpose to promote the cultivation of qualified TCFL teachers for the teaching of Chinese in foreign countries.

**Keywords:** teachers; overseas teaching; problems; strategy analysis.

## 1. Problems of Chinese TCFL Teachers in Overseas Teaching

### 1.1 Lack of Language Ability

The education in China is mainly exam-oriented. The teaching and learning of foreign language just focus on the knowledge on the textbook and students are generally poor in oral language, which has seriously affected the normal communication between Chinese teachers and foreign students. This results in the fact that Chinese teachers cannot do well in communicating and teaching and foreign students cannot understand Chinese language and culture. Such two-way pernicious influences will not only lead to the decline of teaching quality, but also hinder the spread of Chinese language and Chinese culture.

The training organizations for TCFL teachers only highlight the Putonghua Proficiency Test. They focus on the test content and rarely-used Chinese characters, but do not carry out professional training in everyday expressions. Many teachers even take certain dialects in their speaking, and this is very harmful to the teaching and dissemination of Chinese language.

## 2. Inadequate Reserve of Chinese Culture Knowledge and Skills

Culture represents the foundation of a country. In Chinese language teaching, TCFL teachers can show elegant Chinese bearing to the outside world if they master certain Chinese culture. Language and culture are indivisible. Foreign students must also come into contact with Chinese culture when they are learning Chinese, and thus teachers must have sufficient cultural attainments. But many teachers ignore this important element. They think that it is enough if they can learn Chinese well to teach knowledge about Chinese. Some teachers even cannot make clear China's dynasties, and this is harmful to the image of China.

Many teachers think they could cope with overseas teaching as long as they obtain the teaching qualification and speak Mandarin fluently. But TCFL teachers must be equipped with some professional skills. A qualified TCFL teacher must know how to make the classroom atmosphere active, because blindly instilling knowledge will make students feel bored, resulting in inefficient classroom teaching and poor classroom performance. An active classroom atmosphere allows students to learn Chinese in a relaxed and enjoyable environment. Interesting classes allow students to feel that Chinese is nice, so that they will learn more actively [1]. There are many ways to activate the classroom atmosphere, such as teaching students to perform Chinese programs, sing Chinese songs and tell Chinese stories. In addition to activate the classroom atmosphere, these activities are

helpful for students to exercise their oral Chinese. Besides, students who perform well in the class can be given a small reward to encourage them.

### 3. Defective Psychological Quality and Adaptability

TCFL teachers need to teach abroad. The eating habit, lifestyle and cultural atmosphere in a foreign country are quite different from those in China. Therefore, many Chinese language teachers cannot adapt to foreign lifestyles and eating habits after they go abroad. Some teachers may cause many misunderstandings with local people because of cultural differences, affecting their relationship with colleagues. Such bad experience brings great psychological pressure to these teachers. In the final analysis, it is because the psychological quality and adaptability of these TCFL teachers are not high and they do not have enough understanding of local cultural habits. These drawbacks have caused great problems.

## 4. Quality and Requirement of Chinese TCFL Teachers in Overseas Teaching

### 4.1 Good Communication Skills in Foreign Languages

At present, TCFL abroad is generally implemented with the basic teaching language model of “Chinese + foreign languages” -- mainly based on Chinese and foreign language as an auxiliary. Even so, the value of foreign languages cannot be ignored in the process of teaching Chinese language overseas. Only by fully understanding the language habits of a foreign language can teachers understand the way native students think, so as to better teach them. However, many teachers do not understand this point; they think Chinese is the main body of TCFL and thus they do not pay attention to the ability of communicating in foreign languages [2]. However, TCFL teachers must be proficient in a foreign language to conduct in-depth communication with local students, which will help improve their teaching ability. In this sense, they need to be equipped with necessary foreign language ability. At least, they are expected to carry out basic communication in the local language or in English. Students studying abroad are familiar with local language and culture, which is a favorable condition for them to engage in Chinese language teaching. In addition to being used as a communicative language in daily life, the foreign language should be used as a language in working. Participating in academic discussions in foreign languages in classroom is conducive to understanding advanced teaching theories at home and abroad and applying related theories into practical teaching. For foreign students, it is too difficult to do academic discussions in Chinese. TCFL teachers can add local language to the classroom and introduce some content in Chinese in the actual exchange, so as to teach the Chinese language to students in an invisible and formative way.

### 4.2 Good Putonghua Proficiency

TCFL is a language teaching which needs the support of a normative language. It here refers to the normative language that can fully represent the Chinese nation, rather than a dialect. For TCFL teachers, speaking Putonghua well is a prerequisite for reasonable and effective teaching [3]. Having a good level of Putonghua is a basic requirement for TCFL teachers working at home or abroad. A qualified TCFL teacher must achieve a high standard of Putonghua. It is impossible for a teacher who does not speak Putonghua well to teach students to master excellent Chinese proficiency. The most important thing of language learning is “speaking”. TCFL teachers can greatly improve the effectiveness of classroom teaching if they can speak standard Putonghua well. Therefore, the teacher must have a good master and use of Putonghua, that is, he must reach the level 2 grade B in the National Proficiency Test of Putonghua. However, to teach Chinese language abroad need higher Putonghua level and it is better to reach Level 1 and grade B. This is the most basic evaluation criteria. However, attention should also be given to the pronunciation of teachers, so that they can strictly regulate themselves and treat work in the most standard Putonghua at any time [4].

#### 4.3 Solid Chinese Language Knowledge

TCFL teachers should not only master Putonghua, but also have solid Chinese language knowledge. For foreign students who use Chinese as a second language, their ways of speaking, language habits are quite different from native Chinese people. Because of the influence of factors such as the time, place and motivation of learning, they are unaccustomed when learning Chinese, rather than being as comfortable as learning the first language. Therefore, TCFL teachers should be able to explain the basic laws of Chinese pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. There are many specific pronunciations in Chinese language which is much difficult for foreign students to master. Taking the Chinese pinyin “r” for example, many foreign students cannot pronounce it well because of the different pronunciation habits. In this case, some teachers may let the students keep reading after. But if the students still cannot master it after repeating many times, some teacher may have to give up. This is because the teacher lacks the knowledge of phonetics. In fact, students can master the relevant knowledge points well as long as the teacher can combine appropriate explanation and demonstration with a bitmap of the tongue; therefore, a good TCFL teacher needs to learn and master Chinese language knowledge [5].

#### 4.4 Sufficient Knowledge of Chinese Culture

Most of the foreign students who learn Chinese are interested in the long-standing culture of China. If a teacher only teaches the language in the classroom, it will make his students feel bored. Therefore, the mastery of sufficient knowledge of Chinese culture is an essential skill for a good TCFL teacher. The love of a TCFL teacher for Chinese culture will make students feel that this teacher is more attractive. A teacher can teach a language well only when he really loves the language. Similarly, a student can learn a language well only when he falls in love with the language. TCFL teachers' love of Chinese language and Chinese culture from the bottom of their heart can infect their students, and thereby these students can gradually fall in love with Chinese language and Chinese culture, thus enhancing their enthusiasm for learning. Teachers can tell interesting classical Chinese stories in teaching, allowing students to feel the richness and charm of Chinese culture. In addition, it is feasible to recite articles in the classroom with passion, so that students can feel the emotions in the articles and fall in love with Chinese culture in a subtle way.

That TCFL teachers master some skills with Chinese characteristics can increase students' love for Chinese culture and enable teaching to achieve twice the result with half the effort. Not only that, the TCFL teachers who master some traditional Chinese talents also are welcomed by foreign students and teachers, which helps them quickly integrate into the new environment [6].

#### 4.5 Good Psychological Quality and Adaptability

TCFL teachers must have affinity, ability and skills to communicate with others, so that they will be easy to close the distance with students and create a relaxed classroom atmosphere. As a TCFL teacher, the most important thing is to have good psychological quality and adaptability. Without certain psychological quality and adaptability, the professional knowledge of the teachers cannot play its role. With excellent psychological quality and adaptability, TCFL teachers can adapt well to the changes in the living environment, new teaching environment, new students and new interpersonal relationships; on this basis, the teaching tasks can be effectively carried out to achieve professional teaching effects [7].

#### 4.6 Good Intercultural Communication Skills

Intercultural communication skills are a must for TCFL teachers. This is because what TCFL teachers accept is Chinese culture, but their students are from different societies, countries and nationalities and they grow in another cultural background. Great cultural differences may lead to cultural mistakes of teachers, which possibly make students feel disgusted. These cultural mistakes may even violate the moral bottom line and standards of other countries, making students have bad impressions of Chinese culture and producing negative teaching effects. Therefore, teachers must

master good intercultural communication ability in teaching and learn to respect others' values and belief systems, so as to achieve the final effect of TCFL.

#### 4.7 Good Personal Image and Decent Speech and Deportment

TCFL teachers represent the image of China abroad. If they are slovenly, foreigners will feel that all Chinese are slovenly. Therefore, TCFL teachers should be neat and tidy, proportional to their education level and in line with their identity. It is necessary to dress according to local cultural habits. For example, that women do not wear makeup is considered inappropriate in some places. In addition, TCFL teachers are expected to behave in a dignified manner. China has been a state of etiquette for thousands of years and has a good international status in this aspect. Therefore, the TCFL teachers' every move must express the style of the ceremonial state, so that students can feel the kindness.

#### 4.8 Good Education Skills and Ability

A qualified TCFL teacher must have not only sufficient professional knowledge but also certain teaching ability, so that he can control the entire classroom, manage the discipline and adjust the pace of the classroom. TCFL teachers are supposed to well prepare lessons before class, and teach Chinese knowledge and adjust the teaching structure according to the students' reactions. In the teaching process, proper speed of speech and simple words can be made full use to coordinate everyone in the class. Tests should also be arranged according to the actual level of students to consolidate the Chinese knowledge taught. In the classroom, teachers should give students corresponding questions to the students and adjust the difficulty according to the actual situation of students. As a teacher, teacher morality is the most important. The work of teachers is teaching and educating people, which will have profound impacts on students. TCFL teachers are no exception. Teachers must provide education for all people without discrimination. They must be patient enough with students and carefully explain for them. It is significant to correct students' mistakes in an appropriate manner, so as to not compromise their self-esteem.

### 5. Conclusion

In addition to teaching students Chinese knowledge, TCFL teachers are also the spreaders of profound Chinese culture, so their importance is beyond doubt. A qualified TCFL teacher must have good foreign language communication ability to get closer to the students and he must well master Putonghua and conduct reasonable and effective teaching. He should be equipped with solid Chinese knowledge to solve problems that students cannot understand. It is needed to have a good knowledge of Chinese culture to show the world the Chinese culture. TCFL teachers must own good psychological quality and adaptability to integrate into the local environment as soon as possible. Good intercultural communication skills are also needed to get closer to students. TCFL teachers must have a good personal image and decent manners to showcase the style of a great country. It is also necessary to have good educational and technical ability to give students the best education. Only with these skills can TCFL teachers effectively carry out teaching work and even promote Chinese culture.

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